

Good morning Chairman Gaffney and members of the House Health Policy Committee. My name is Kelly Hamilton, Political Director of MARAL Pro-Choice Michigan. I am here on behalf of our Board of Directors and members to voice our opposition to House Bill 5311.

As an organization focused on promoting and protecting patients' access to reproductive health care, we at MARAL Pro-Choice Michigan are concerned that, in the future, this bill will hinder patients' rights to access comprehensive healthcare. MARAL Pro-Choice Michigan opposes this legislation and urges this committee to vote against House Bill 5311.

Emergency contraception (EC) is a simple, concentrated dose of birth control pills that is safe and effective for preventing pregnancy. Emergency contraception is NOT the abortion pill known as RU-486. In fact, emergency contraception pills do not work if a woman is already pregnant, nor do they harm the fetus should a woman take emergency contraception pills while pregnant.

Research has shown that increased use of emergency contraception pills could reduce the number of unintended pregnancies in the United States by half, thereby greatly reducing the need for abortion. Similarly, a 2002 study revealed that emergency contraception pill use was likely responsible for up to 43% of the decline in the number of abortions in the United States between 1994 and 2000.

As you know, House Bill 5311 would ban emergency contraceptives from being sold in Michigan by anyone other than pharmacists, blocking over-the-counter sales of EC, even if the Food and Drug Administration one day approves of its use. EC is currently only available with a prescription, prohibiting too many women from obtaining it in a timely manner. Though effective for up to 120 hours after unprotected sex, EC is up to 95% effective when used within 24 hours.

The Advisory Committee to the Food and Drug Administration, in a 23-4 vote, agreed that EC should be sold over-the-counter. While political interference seems to be blocking the approval of emergency contraceptives being sold over-the counter, when and if the FDA does grant approval, the Michigan Legislature should not override that decision. In doing so, Michigan would be blocking timely access to a medication that could *prevent* thousands of unintended pregnancies and abortions right here in our state.

Thank you for your attention,

Kelly J Hamilton
Political Director
MARAL Pro-Choice Michigan